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Pentagon Sees Threat in a Red Portugal

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2, (Reuter)s—Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger said today that the ability of the United States Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean to survive in wartime would be endangered if Portugal became Communist.

Mr. Schlesinger was asked during a taped television interview with Senator James L. Buckley, Conservative-Republican of New York, what would be if Portugal fell within the Soviet Union's orbit and Soviet submarines were based in Portuguese ports.

"I think that any movement of that sort, which we of course hope would not take place, would endanger the viability of the Sixth Fleet," Mr. Schlesinger said, according to a transcript released by the Pentagon.

C.I.A. Damaged

Mr. Schlesinger also said he thought that the Central Intelligence Agency's sources of information and the willingness of foreign overnments to work with the C.I.A. had been "dramatically reduced" by government investigations of the agency and by leaks from Congressional committees.

He noted that in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the United States was living

with a higher level of risk than it would like with regard to the military and naval balance with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Mediterranean fleet outnumbered the Sixth Fleet three to two during the 1973 Middle East war, and Mr. Schlesinger said this caused the former Navy chief, Adm., Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., to be concerned about the United States capacity in the eastern Mediterranean.

Communist domination of Portugal, Mr. Schlesinger said, "would raise the question about our capacity in the western Mediterranean as well."

Call for Balance

In an allusion to Congress, the Defense Secretary said many people were interested in the precise military balance between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

"But of equal importance is the over-all military balance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union so that the United States can hold the ring, as it were, in the Middle East," Mr. Schlesinger said.

In answer to another question from Senator Buckley, he said he was "painfully aware" that 40 per cent of the senators who recently signed a resolution of support for Israel rou-

tinely vote against increased defense spending.

Noting that the Soviet Union is presently spending in excess of 30 per cent more than the United States on Defense, Mr. Schlesinger said that if this trend continued, "it will make us second best in terms of strength by the end of the decade."

The Secretary compared Congressional arguments against the building of an American refueling and supply base on the British-owned island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean with similar pre-world War II arguments against the fortification of Guam, which proved of critical value during the war.